# THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • APRIL 13, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

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**UKRAINE TO ALLOW INDIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS TO WRITE EXAM IN INDIA**

**This was conveyed by Ukraine's deputy foreign minister Emine Dzhaparova during her meeting with Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) in the MEA**

**STUDENTS TO COMPLETE DEGREES VIRTUALLY**

Medical students will be allowed to complete their degrees virtually and give the exams from India. "On the issue of Indian medical students, the deputy foreign minister mentioned that Ukraine will allow foreign medical students to take the Unified State Qualification Exam in their country of domicile," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement on Wednesday

**KYIV SEEKS NEW DELHI'S HELP TO REBUILD**

- The MEA said Ukraine requested for additional humanitarian supply, including medicines and medical equipment. In her meeting with Secretary (West), Dzhaparova proposed that rebuilding infrastructure in Ukraine could be an opportunity for Indian companies
- Dzhaparova was in India on a two-day visit during April 10-12

**20,000**

**NO. OF INDIAN STUDENTS WHO RETURNED FROM UKRAINE, ACCORDING TO THE MEA**


CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI


# BJP sees rebellion: Savadi, Sogadu, Katte to quit party

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

A day after BJP announced its first list of 189 candidates, the party is facing rebellion from the aspirants who have been denied tickets.

Many of them have openly expressed their displeasure even as their followers took to the streets. Some flew to Delhi to meet the party's top leaders.

In many constituencies, BJP workers protested against the party leadership for denying tickets to their leaders. They raised slogans against the party and set ablaze tyres on roads. Some even shed tears for the treatment meted out to their leaders.

Meanwhile, CM Basavaraj Bommai and former CM BS Yediyurappa expressed confidence that the rebellion will not have any impact on the party's prospects in the Assembly elections. "The selection of candidates has been welcomed in almost all constituencies and talks with dissatisfied leaders are on," Bommai said.

Former deputy CM and MLC Lakshman Savadi said he will quit BJP. He is expected to make an announcement in this regard on Thursday. Former minister R Shankar resigned from the party and also as MLC on Wednesday after he was denied ticket. He quit the JDS-Congress coalition government in 2019 and joined BJP. He was made MLC by BJP.

In Belagavi district, former MLA Vishwanath Patil, who was expecting the party ticket for Bailhongal seat, has openly expressed his displeasure. After the list was announced, he said the party had cheated him. Patil won the seat on KJP ticket in 2013. He is a follower of Yediyurappa. Many of his followers have also threatened to quit the party.

In Tumkur, BJP leader and former minister Sogadu Shivanna said he would resign from the party and contest as an independent candidate.

According to party sources, tickets were given to newcomers and not to loyalists in Mandya district.

CONTINUED ON: P4

**NO SHETTAR YET**

## BJP releases 2nd list of 23 candidates

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru/New Delhi

THE BJP released its second list of 23 candidates on Wednesday night despite rebellion following its first list of 189 candidates on Tuesday.

The party, which denied tickets to nine sitting MLAs in the first list, dropped a few legislators while preparing the second list.

It has not announced any candidate for Hubballi-Dharwad Central constituency, which is represented in the Assembly by former chief minister Jagadish Shettar, who met party's national president JP Nadda in Delhi on Wednesday.

After a meeting with senior leaders, including chief strategist Amit Shah, the party's central election committee announced the second list.

While accommodating Nagaraja Chabbi, a Congress leader, who recently joined BJP, to contest from Kalghatgi, the party dropped Mudigere MLA MP Kumaraswamy, who is facing opposition from a section of its workers, and selected Deepak Doddaiah.

CONTINUED ON: P5

# Amid UPA convenor buzz, Nitish meets Cong brass

Kharge, Rahul say it's a historic first step to forge Opposition unity

PREETHA NAIR & RAMASHANKAR @ New Delhi/Patna

AMID speculation over Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar being appointed UPA convenor, the JD(U) leader along with Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Prasad Yadav on Wednesday called on Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi to discuss strategy for creating an anti-BJP front ahead of 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Later in the day, Nitish and Tejashwi met AAP convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Both Kharge and Rahul described the meeting as historic, since it set the ball rolling for forging Opposition unity. "We all will work together to achieve that goal," Kharge said.

The meeting comes days after Kharge spoke to Nitish, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and former Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray. Nitish, who landed in Delhi on Tuesday, met RJD patriarch Lalu Prasad Yadav.

In Patna, RJD spokesperson Bhai Birendra said Nitish would be authorised to play the role of UPA convenor.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi greets Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at party president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence, in New Delhi on Wednesday | PTI

Ever since Nitish walked out of the NDA alliance in Bihar, he has been at the forefront of bringing disparate parties together to put up a united front against the BJP. Speaking to the media, Nitish said: "If everybody agrees, we will work together. The Congress has already taken some initiative and spoken to some parties. We are also holding talks."

For his part, Rahul was philosophical, saying coming together is a process.

> **In this battle of ideology, a historic step has been taken toward Opposition unity today. Standing together, we will fight for India**
>
> Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

Signalling that Nitish will work as a bridge between Congress and parties such as the Trinamool Congress, AAP and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, JD(U) leader K C Tyagi told this newspaper that the meeting was a good beginning.

"The JD(U) and RJD have been waiting for such a meeting since December. Today, we were able to break the impasse. Some of the regional parties maintain a distance from the Congress. We know that without Congress, Opposition unity is not possible. Nitish shares a good rapport with many leaders like Naveen Patnaik, Stalin and Chautala," he said.

**EXPRESS READ**

### Three die in fire near venue of BRS meeting

Hyderabad: Three persons died and five others were injured in a fire accident near the venue of a meeting of the BRS at a village in Khammam district on Wednesday. Firecrackers were burst and one of them is thought to have fallen on a small hut near the meeting venue, police said | P5

### Social media rules in India 'quite strict': Musk

London: Twitter CEO Elon Musk on Wednesday said social media laws in India are 'quite strict' while asserting he did not know "what exactly happened" when his microblogging site blocked content related to a controversial BBC documentary. He also agreed to change BBC's Twitter account label from "government funded media" to "publicly-funded" | P11

# IN THE SHADOW FIGHT BETWEEN BSY & SANTHOSH, EX-CM WINS FIRST ROUND

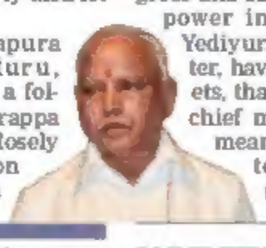
BANSY KALAPPA @ Bengaluru

THERE is a clear former chief minister **BS Yediyurappa**'s stamp on the first list of BJP candidates announced on Tuesday to 189 constituencies in Karnataka, which is going to the polls on May 10.

At the same time, there are no indications of any undue influence of powerful BJP national general secretary (organisation) BL Santhosh in selecting candidates, as was initially feared by Yediyurappa's loyalists.

For instance, in Tumakuru Rural, Santhosh was in favour of Sogadu Shivanna, but the seat has gone to B Suresh, a Yediyurappa follower. It did not matter in the end that Suresh, who was caught in the fight between the two giants in the party, had to quit as party district president earlier.

For Byatarayanapura ward in Bengaluru, Thammesh Gowda, a follower of the Yediyurappa camp and who was closely working with his son BY Vijayendra, was chosen over the previous candidate A Ravi.



While there was a campaign within the party to not give the ticket to GH Thippa Reddy from Chitradurga, Yediyurappa prevailed. Most of the 17 turncoats, who switched from Congress and JDS to bring BJP to power in 2019 and make Yediyurappa chief minister, have been given tickets, thanks to the former chief minister, even if it meant denying a ticket to one of the original partymen. P2

> **One cannot separate BJP into different groups, with factions supporting different leaders. It is also true that no one can claim to be Yediyurappa, who has toiled hard for the party for four decades**
>
> Go. Madhusudan, BJP leader

**SANJAY DUTT SAYS HE'S FINE AND HEALTHY**

Following reports of actor Sanjay Dutt getting injured while shooting a scene of the movie KD in Bengaluru, the actor on Wednesday took to Twitter to put an end to the rumours | P5

**NOT TERROR**

## 4 Army jawans gunned down in Bathinda

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

FOUR Army soldiers were on Wednesday gunned down in a pre-dawn attack at the Bathinda military station in what the Punjab Police speculated was a case of fratricide.

There was also no terror angle to it. Additional Director General of Police S P S Parmar said, "It is not a terror attack. It is not an attack from outside." A joint team of the police and the Army is probing the case.

The assailants were described as two unidentified persons of medium height with their faces covered and in white kurta-pajamas, one with an INSAS rifle and the other carrying an axe. They were seen escaping through a forested area near the barracks.

An INSAS rifle allotted to a jawan on March 31 was reported lost on April 9 along with 28 rounds of ammunition. The slain jawans — Sagar Banne (25), Kamalesh R (24), Yogesh Kumar J (24) and Santosh M Nagaral (25) — were asleep in their barracks when the assailants opened fire around 4.30 am. The victims belonged to the artillary unit.

A case has been registered at Bathinda Cantonment Police Station based on a complaint by Major Ashutosh Shukla.

"A search team has located the INSAS rifle along with the magazine. Forensic analysis of the weapon will help ascertain the identity of the assailants," the Army said.

The Army's 10 Corps is stationed at Bathinda. Its Quick Reaction Teams have been activated. The area has been cordoned off and sealed. Search operations are still on.

Union defence minister Rajnath Singh was briefed on the situation by Army Chief General Manoj Pande.

# Retail inflation cools to 15-month low, IIP rises

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

AFTER staying above 6% for two consecutive months, retail inflation eased to a 15-month low of 5.66% in March, coming under RBI's comfort zone.

Retail inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, was 6.44% in February 2023 and 6.95% in the year-ago period. The previous low was also 5.66% in December 2021.

The cooling of inflation was on the back of lower prices of vegetables and other items such as oils and fats, whose index fell 2.6% in March on a monthly basis. There was a drop in the prices of cereals, sugar and confectionery, too.

"The steep drop was aided by a high base effect, which is expected to support at least in the entire first quarter. The base had swelled due to a sharp surge in oil and food prices after the Russia-Ukraine conflict began last February and due to strengthening demand after the third Covid wave subsided," said Dharmakirti Joshi, chief economist at Crisil.

**READING THE FINE PRINT**

- The dramatic drop in retail inflation in March was aided by a favourable base effect
- Lower inflation can help boost business confidence, which will in turn lead to increased economic activity

Meanwhile, the Index of Industrial Production — which measures the performance of eight core sectors — surged 5.6% in February against 5.5% in January, thanks to improvement in manufacturing.